



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

May 18, 2020

The Honorable Jim Wood
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 3224 (Rodriguez) as Amended 5/4/20 - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Wood:

The County of San Bernardino respectfully urges your support of AB 3224 which would require the California Department of Public Health to contract with an appropriate entity to conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of local health department infrastructure, including an assessment of future staffing, workforce, and resource needs.

Local health departments play a critical role in protecting and promoting the health and well-being of County residents. The role and importance of local public health has been most evidently displayed amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other disasters and emergencies faced by our jurisdiction. In carrying out this important work, we rely on a workforce of highly trained and specialized public health professionals, including: physicians, nurses, medical assistants, epidemiologists, health educators, communicable disease investigators, environmental health specialists, dieticians, nutritionists and many others.

San Bernardino County is the largest geographic county in the United States and we face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining these well-qualified employees due to competition with the private sector, transportation issues, lack of available housing in close proximity to employment centers, and low retention rates from locally-educated and trained staff. These infrastructure and workforce challenges may hamper critical public health protection and promotion activities in our communities and can limit our ability to adequately prepare for and respond to public health emergencies and pandemics.

AB 3224 would provide an opportunity for state and local governments in California to better understand the adequacy of local health department infrastructure, including needs related to local health department staffing, workforce, and resources. Findings and recommendations produced by this assessment will serve as a useful roadmap in better supporting the development and retention of a skilled and diverse public health workforce necessary to carrying out the vital services we provide to our jurisdiction.

As evidenced by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the role and function of local health departments in California are critical in ensuring the health and safety of California's nearly 40

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million residents. San Bernardino County is committed to developing and retaining a skilled and diverse public health workforce.

For the above reasons, the County of San Bernardino respectfully requests your support of AB 3224. If you have any questions regarding the County's position, please do not hesitate to contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcountry.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Hagman", with a stylized, flowing script.

Curt Hagman
Fourth District Supervisor
Chairman, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Health Committee
The Honorable Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez
San Bernardino County Legislative Delegation